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CURRENT OPINION

Cryptic Modernism in the Roman Church

The crusade against Modernism in the Roman church has failed of its purpose and merely run the newer type of faith to cover, if we are correctly informed by Francis Eagle, a Roman Catholic writer in the August *Contemporary Review*. Even the very ones that Rome expected to catch by the new test oath swallowed it without a grimace and went their way rejoicing. We can only conclude that as an oath taken with a pistol held at one's head may not be binding, so this oath, forced under such conditions, may have been taken in the same sense. It is not surprising that the majority of Modernist converts to Romanism occupy a position of compromise. They speak the truth and nothing but the truth; but they do not speak the whole truth. Catholic Modernism is simply a phase of Catholicism itself, the necessary manner of belief of a minority in the church. It is an interpretation of dogma, a simplification of faith. It is normally silent, and never speaks to disturb. It knows that each man must see truth from his own outlook and understand it according to the disposition of his own mental powers.

England's Ecclesiastical Sweatshop

That religion would gain, and official churches lose, by the withdrawal of wealthy patronage from the Church of England is the contention of Colonel D. C. Pedder, in a recent number of the *Westminster Review*. As it is, the Anglican church, so far as the great majority of its ministers are concerned, is a mere clerical sweatshop. The clergy of the Establishment are paid butler's wages to live and act like genteel members of society. They and their children are raised to a false ideal of life, and they occupy an impossible position.

The church condescends to the common people who form nineteen-twentieths of the population; but she is not of them. She retains her eminently respectable position by virtue of the support she receives from the other twentieth. Her very existence demands that she shall remain constant to one article of faith—that her interest is identical with that of the upper class. A strange revolution has accomplished itself. The religion that was born among the poor has come to belong to the rich, to be administered by them and to be served out to the poor by their agents in uniform. Experience has taught the laboring man that “the gentry” regard him as a profit-making machine. Why, then, should he pay any attention to what their henchman the parson says?

Germany's Moral Atmosphere

The July *Quarterly Review* publishes an article, entitled “Modern Forces in German Literature,” which is of special interest in view of current history. The writer, T. W. Rolleston, thinks the unification of Germany is still largely a matter of external forms and is not organic and vital in such a fashion as to produce the moral atmosphere necessary to a healthy national life. Prince von Buelow, in his recent book *Imperial Germany*, has spoken of the necessity of reconciling Prussian political supremacy with the intellectual life of South Germany. It does not seem likely that a nation can be educated up to the point where the German people now find themselves, and that the bureaucrat will permanently remain in the position of moral and social authority which Prussian ideas assign to him. Some day the rigid structure must surely be loosened. The tides of intellectual life must sap and dissolve it. It must be transformed by the social chemistry, which

is at work in every living and growing nation, into forms more consonant with the needs and characteristics of the modern German spirit. We are witnessing a period of transition, of widespread disintegration, and of pitiless analysis. How will it end? Perhaps in a new and more glorious Germany than the world has yet seen. Perhaps in a torpid and sterile nation in which nothing but a mighty convulsion can again prepare the soil for the seeds of poetry and thought.

The Early Form of the Lord's Prayer

Professor C. Torrey writes in the *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* for March, 1914, on "A Possible Metrical Original of the Lord's Prayer." He gives a possible Aramaic original in six lines of seven syllables, which is the syllabic meter *par excellence* in Aramaic literature, so far as our knowledge goes. The text adopted by Professor Torrey shows rhymes, and we know the widespread tendency to use rhyme in prayer at least in the Near East. The original version constructed by Professor Torrey could very easily have been translated by Luke into Greek. It is not possible to make similar verses by any retroversion from Matthew's Greek.

World-wide Syndicalism

Articles on the revolutionary phase of socialism throughout the world continue to appear in the leading magazines. Syndicalism in New Zealand is treated at some length in the *Quarterly Review* for July, by W. H. Triggs. New Zealand, he recalls, was for some time referred to as "the country without strikes." It is so no longer. The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act has at length failed completely in achieving the main object for which it was passed, namely, the prevention of strikes. The labor unions have lately been permeated by the doctrines of "red" socialism as taught by the I.W.W. of America. The

consequence has been a series of violent strikes intended not merely to get a wage-increase, but for the purpose of tiring out the employing class, so that "the means of production and distribution" would eventually fall into the hands of the workers. At one time, it seemed as if the country were trembling on the verge of civil war. The government scrupulously refrained from using the territorials; but hundreds of them, volunteering as private citizens, helped to preserve order. Very soon the turbulent spirits were overawed and kept in hand. Steady perseverance in this course soon instilled a feeling of wholesome respect into the minds of the revolutionaries. The magistrates dealt firmly, but not too severely with the cases brought before them. There will be no further talk of a general, revolutionary strike among the present generation of New Zealand workers. They have learned a lesson by experience which they would never accept when it was enforced upon them by precept, namely, that no British community will allow war to be made upon itself by one section of the people without striking a blow in self-defense. The heroes of the hour are the stalwart, sinewy young farmers, tanned with their open-air life in the country. The Federation of Labor has been crushingly defeated, and it is probably not too much to say that syndicalism in this part of the world has received its death-blow.

In somewhat different perspective is the paper entitled "Syndicalism and the General Strike in Italy," by George B. McClellan, ex-mayor of New York City, in the September *Atlantic*. This article is very timely, owing to the resistance of the Italian workers to participation of their country in the European war. Mr. McClellan's point of departure is the events of June last, when the laboring people of Italy organized a strike which almost subverted the monarchy. Four revolutionary groups—socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, and republicans

—shade off by imperceptible degrees into each other. They work together in a sort of offensive and defensive alliance having for its purpose the destruction of existing institutions. The membership of the four groups is chiefly from the working classes, with a small admixture of professional men and shopkeepers. The recent general strike was a grim warning to the government and to the nation that under favorable conditions it is quite possible that a minority of the people may destroy the whole social and political fabric of modern Italy. A well-organized minority frightened the authorities, terrified the public, and paralyzed the activities of nearly thirty million people for over forty-eight hours.

Evolution and Soteriology

In the *Church Quarterly Review* for April, 1914, Mr. P. N. Waggett studies "Evolution and Atonement." As Mr. McDowall has shown it in a recent book, *Evolution and the Need of Atonement*, the great difficulty in the doctrine of atonement is this: "If sin is but inherited imperfection, how can we believe that man was ever wholly alienated from God because of sin?" Evolution means advance, and advance consists in co-ordination with environment. Sin is the putting-aside of the sole opportunity of advance according to the will of God; it is a treaty with death: the creature passes from the line of advance into a *cul-de-sac*. The only hope, still according to Mr. McDowall, lies either in the upspringing of a new vital impulse or else in the freeing

of man from the consequences of his own wrong acts. The first alternative he dismisses, as an interruption of the whole process of the growth of evolution; the other way is the removal of man's self-imposed check on progress. Mr. Waggett thinks that the dilemma is not necessarily true. Salvation is a rescue from without; a new life has arrived but it has arrived in the channels of our own life; a new and good life has become man's life that man's life may become good. If this is a breach of continuity in the evolution of humanity and in the life of certain men, it is like the breach which occurs in the ordered process of a man's drowning when he is lifted from the water by another. This great interruption is included enough in the great continuum of life; but it transcends the continuum of the disaster. What we trust to, what will remove man's self-imposed check on progress is this new vital impulse made ours; rescued from drowning, we are rescued to breathe. By experience we know these elements of the tragedy of sin: offense and injured love; a remaining love that knows its sin; and the love offended but merciful; pardon; and influence. These facts of experience are met with in relations of man with man; we project them in the relation between man and God. The grant of this pardon, the exercise of this influence, may break a "continuity" which perhaps does not exist as clearly as some like to say; this may offend the forensic logic of a *lex talionis*, but they remain in our own experience the finest things of human life.